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Editorial: Wintery driving tips

It's February and, as you may have noticed, winter weather became a fact of life for commuters once again last week.

We all want to get where we're going as quickly and safely as possible. In that spirit, we are presenting this short list of winter weather driving tips:

Put. Your. Phone. Down.: We've all done it. We all know it's stupid and dangerous. Yet, we persist. The seasonal threat of black ice on the roadway in front of you should be more than enough reason for getting out of the habit of interacting with your phone in any way while driving. If it absolutely can't wait, find a safe place to pull over first.

Slow down: Under normal circumstances, most highway drivers treat the speed limit like a helpful suggestion more than an actual law. Those who try to drive the speed limit or faster when the weather is bad are taking both their lives and everyone else's on the road into their hands. If you're in that much of a hurry, leave sooner.

Back off: Can the driver of the 18-wheel truck in front of you be seen in the side-view mirrors of the cab? No? Then he can't see you. Are you less than one car length behind another vehicle while you're both barreling down the

highway? Slow your roll. One car length per every 10 miles per hour you're going is a good guide when the weather is perfect. Extend this even more when the weather is bad.

Gas up: The likelihood of being stranded when inclement weather strikes obviously goes up. Don't be caught off-guard. Keep your car at least filled up enough so you're not in danger of running out of gas should you need to wait for help.

Prepare supplies: Speaking of being stranded, what will you do personally if you get stranded? Do you have food, water, a way to call for help? It's better to have it and not need it.